United Nations A/53/625/Add.4

General Assembly

Distr.: General
30 November 1998
English
Original: Arabic

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 110 (d)

Human rights questions: comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

Report of the Third Committee*

Rapporteur: Mr. Hassan Kassem **Najem** (Lebanon)

I. Introduction

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 15 September 1998, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Human rights questions: comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action" and to allocate it to the Third Committee.

2. The Committee considered the item at its 30th to 32nd meetings, on 2 and 3 November 1998, and took action on the item at its 51st meeting, on 20 November. An account of the Committee's discussion is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.3/52/SR.30–32 and 51).

3. For the documents before the Committee under this item, see A/53/625.

4. At the 30th meeting, on 2 November, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights made an introductory statement (see A/C.3/53/SR.30).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.65

5. At its 51st meeting, on 20 November, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled "Comprehensive implementation and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in six parts, under the symbol A/53/625 and Add.1–5.

Programme of Action (A/C.3/53/L.65), submitted by the Chairman on the basis of informal consultations.

6. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.65 without a vote (see para. 7).

III. Recommendation of the Third Committee

7. The Third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 48/121 of 20 December 1993, in which it endorsed the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993,[1] as well as its subsequent resolutions on this matter, in particular resolution 52/148 of 12 December 1997,

Recalling also paragraph 100 of part II of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action concerning the five-year review of progress made in the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, including the need to pay special attention to assessing the progress towards the goal of universal ratification of international human rights treaties and protocols adopted within the framework of the United Nations,

Recognizing that the five-year implementation review of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, carried out on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[2] has provided an opportunity to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights,

Reaffirming that human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings, that their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of Governments, and that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated,

Convinced that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action has to be translated into effective action by States, the competent United Nations organs and organizations and other organizations concerned, including non-governmental organizations,

Welcoming the significant steps taken over the past five years at both national and international levels to implement the recommendations made by the World Conference on Human Rights,

Deeply concerned, however, about the wide gap that continues to exist between the promise of human rights and their promotion and protection worldwide, and also deeply concerned about denials and violations of human rights — civil, cultural, economic, political and social — including the right to development,

Reaffirming the important role of non-governmental organizations in the promotion of all human rights and in humanitarian activities at the national, regional and international levels, and appreciating their contribution to increasing public awareness of human rights

[1] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

[2] Resolution 217 A (III).

issues, to the conduct of education, training and research in this field, and to the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Recalling that the Economic and Social Council devoted the coordination segment of its substantive session of 1998 to the question of the coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action by the United Nations system,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action[3] and the conclusions contained therein;

2. *Solemnly declares* its commitment to the fulfilment of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights;[1]

3. *Welcomes* agreed conclusions 1998/2 of the Economic and Social Council[4] on the coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and calls for their full implementation;

4. *Reaffirms* that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action continues to constitute a solid foundation for further action and initiatives by States, the United Nations and other relevant intergovernmental bodies and organizations, as well as concerned national institutions and non-governmental organizations;

5. *Calls upon* all States to take further action with a view to the full realization of all human rights for all in the light of the recommendations of the World Conference;

6. *Decides* to continue its consideration of this question at its fifty-fourth session under the sub-item entitled "Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action".

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[3] A/53/372, annex.

[4] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/53/3), chap. VI, para. 3.

United Nations A/53/625/Add.5

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Fifty-third session
Agenda item 110 (e)

Human rights questions: report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Report of the Third Committee*

Rapporteur: Mr. Hassan Kassem **Najem** (Lebanon)

I. Introduction

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 15 September 1998, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Human rights questions: report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights" and to allocate it to the Third Committee.

2. The Third Committee held a substantive debate on the sub-item jointly with sub-items 110 (b) and (c) at its 33rd to 41st meetings, from 4 to 6 and on 9 and 10 November 1998, and took action on the item its 47th and 51st meetings, on 16 and 20 November. An account of the Committee's discussion is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.3/53/SR.33–41, 47 and 51).

3. For the documents before the Committee under this item, see A/53/625.

4. At the 33rd meeting, on 4 November, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights made an introductory statement (see A/C.3/53/SR.33).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.45

5. At the 47th meeting, on 16 November, the representative of South Africa, on behalf of *Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria,* the *Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire,*

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Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Liberia, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Monaco, Namibia, New Zealand, the *Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal,* the *Republic of Korea, Romania, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine* and the *United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Question of resources for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the human rights activities of the United Nations" (A/C.3/53/L.45). Subsequently, *Argentina, Azerbaijan, Belize, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Mongolia, Morocco, Poland,* the *Republic of Moldova,* the *Russian Federation, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda,* the *United States of America, Venezuela* and *Zambia* joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

6. At the 51st meeting, on 20 November, the Secretary of the Committee read out a statement of the programme budget implications of the draft resolution.

7. At the same meeting, the representative of South Africa orally revised the draft resolution as follows:

(a) The phrase "without diverting resources from United Nations development programmes and activities" was added at the end of operative paragraph 1;

(b) Operative paragraph 2, which read:

"2. *Calls upon* competent intergovernmental bodies to take Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/83 and Economic and Social Council decision 1998/275 fully into account, in particular in the consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001",

was deleted and the subsequent paragraph was renumbered accordingly.

8. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.45, as orally revised, without a vote (see para.10).

9. Before the adoption of the draft resolution, statements were made by the representatives of Pakistan and Algeria; after the adoption of the draft resolution, statements were made by the representatives of New Zealand, Canada, Australia, the United States of America, Senegal and Cuba (see A/C.3/53/SR.51).

III. Recommendation of the Third Committee

10. The Third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Question of resources for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the human rights activities of the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Recalling Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/83 of 24 April 1998[1] on the question of resources for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the human rights activities of the United Nations, in which the Commission

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1998, Supplement No. 3* (E/1998/23), chap. II, sect. A.

expressed its concern that, with the resources currently available from the United Nations regular budget, the High Commissioner would not be in a position to fulfil the full range of established and new mandates, and therefore appealed to the Secretary-General, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly to take all necessary steps, without delay, to secure for the Office of the High Commissioner and other relevant components of the Organization regular budget resources for the current and future bienniums that would be sufficient to permit the effective fulfilment of the responsibilities and mandates established by Member States and commensurate with the importance assigned in the Charter of the United Nations to the promotion and protection of human rights,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council decision 1998/275 of 30 July 1998, in which the Council, taking note of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/83, approved the Commission's appeal to the Council, the Secretary-General and the General Assembly,

Taking note of other relevant resolutions and decisions of the Commission on Human Rights, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly containing requests and proposals concerning the regular budget for the human rights programme,

1. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take all necessary steps, without delay, to follow up Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/83 and Economic and Social Council decision 1998/275, in particular in the preparation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, without diverting resources from United Nations development programmes and activities;

2. *Decides* to continue its consideration of this question at its fifty-fourth session under the item entitled "Human rights questions".